(b) whether there have been deliberate attempt on the part of the insurance companies to delay encashment of cheques beyond a reasonable time, just to invalidate the currency of the policy and to reject the claims; and

(c) if so, whether the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority will evolve guidelines for prompt encashment of premium cheques by the insurance companies and such other protection the insurer is entitled to?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) and (b) Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) has reported that it does not have information in this regard. However, a complaint has been received by IRDA recently from an insured against an insurer, which indicates that one of the cheques was dishonored on account of insufficiency of funds.

(c) To protect the interest of policyholders, IRDA has already notified the IRDA (Protection of Policyholders' Interest Regulations in 2002. These *inter-alia*, require that insurance companies should have adequate standards of servicing of policyholders and also casts a duty upon the companies to promptly address the issues and concerns of the policyholders. Further, the Insurance Act, 1938 clearly mandates the manner of receipt of premium and assumption of risk.

Available foreign exchange reserve of the country

†463. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount of foreign exchange available in the country;

(b) the names of the countries whose currencies are available in the Foreign Exchange Reserve of the country;

(c) the amount invested by Reserve Bank of India during the last three years from the said Reserve; and

(d) the effect of non-utilization of these reserves for productive work on the prices of commodities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) The Foreign Exchange Reserves comprising Foreign Currency Assets (FCA), Gold, Special Drawing Rights and Reserve Tranche Position with IMF stood at US $ 251.5 billion as on February 6, 2009, of which FCA component was US $ 241.8 billion.

(b) The Foreign Currency Assets (FCAs) are maintained as a multi currency portfolio comprising major currencies such as US Dollar, Euro, Pound Sterling, Japanese Yen etc.

(c) Keeping in view the guiding objectives of safety, liquidity and optimization of returns under foreign exchange reserve management, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) invests FCA in multi-

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

currency and multi-asset portfolios through investment in securities and deposits with other Central Banks, Bank for International Settlement (BIS), International Monetary Fund (IMF) etc.

(d) Since the foreign exchange reserves are invested outside the country, there is no direct impact on prices of commodities.

Tax collection from Maharashtra

464. SHRI Y.P. TRIVEDI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the amount collected by way of taxes from Maharashtra and particularly from Mumbai in the last three years, year-wise;

(b) the amount of Central funds provided to the State during these years, year-wise;

(c) what percentage did the Central fund constitute of the tax collection, year-wise; and

(d) whether the percentage nearly holds for the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Cash crunch in the real-estate sector

465. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to spurt in building/real-estate sector, most of the large developers are facing cash crunch and are resorting to borrowing from un-organized sector at high rates of interest;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) its impact on real-estate prices and generation of black money; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to control black money and real-estate prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (d) Following the global melt-down a liquidity constraint was felt by many sectors of the economy, including building/real estate sector. In order to ensure that this sector is not adversely affected the RBI took a number of measures to improve the liquidity constraints and to bring down the overall cost of credit. With reduction in the REPO rates, the scheduled commercial banks were able to bring down their lending rates to the housing/real estate sector. A Special Refinance facility of Rs.4,000 crore was introduced in December, 2008 to enable the National Housing Bank (NHB) to lend to Housing Finance Companies at reasonable rate of interest. Further more, in view of the difficulties faced by the real estate sector, exceptions/special treatment has been extended to commercial real estate exposures which are